

February 25, 2011

The Honorable Gail Slossberg Chair, Government Administration and Elections
The Honorable Russ Morin Chair, Government Administration and Elections
Legislative Office Building
Room 2200
Hartford, CT 06106

Senate Bill 557 - An act designating Irish-American Heritage month and Italian-American Heritage month

There seem to be so many of the months of the year that are dedicated to worthy causes and reminders of things past, present and future in our lives and what better way than to remember the Irish, than in the month of its Patron Saint (iconic symbol), St Patrick.

On July 26, 1945, a small group of Irish and Irish-Americans met at the Eire Tavern in Hartford to formulate plans for an Irish-American Society. John Walsh, Jim Larkin, John McDermott, Bill Carey, Joe Flynn, and Stanley McDermott were the founders of the IAH Society. Prior to 1945, there had been several Irish groups in the Hartford area, some of which had dissolved due to a lack of a central meeting place. It was felt that a unified, single group would best serve the needs of the Irish community. The general mission of the IAH Society was and continues to be, a society that welcomes and brings together Irish and Irish-American families and practices and preserves Irish traditions, culture, music, and friendship.

The Irish-American Home Society was officially incorporated in 1945. Our original meeting place was at 700 Park Street, Hartford, but within a short time the IAH Society moved to larger quarters within Lyric Hall at 593 Park Street, Hartford.

In 1955 due to a surge in membership and the need for larger quarters, the IAH Society purchased property at 69 Grove Street, Hartford, and remained there until our move to 132 Commerce Street, Glastonbury, in December 1967. The IAH Society has experienced a rapid growth since its origin in 1945 and currently has over 2,000 members.

The IAH Society is proud of its indoor and outdoor facilities in Glastonbury and trusts that it will be a gathering place for members and their families - young and old, to spend many enjoyable hours.

It is our desire to serve all our members - old and new. We believe that the Irish-American Society will continue to serve as the focal point for newcomers to our shores to understand and appreciate our American way of life. We further believe that this society will afford all of our membership the opportunity to continue their appreciation and preservation of the Irish culture.

Everyone celebrates St Patrick's Day...everyone "Is Irish" on St. Patrick's Day..but so many of the ways they celebrate St. Patrick's Day are stereotypical clichés ...to have a month dedicated to making the world aware...or rather more aware than they already are of the number of great contributions to society that have been made in the form of technology, politics, peacemakers, arts.....have been Irish.

On Saturday March 12, 2011, the streets of Hartford will once again come alive with all things Irish in celebration of our 40th Anniversary parade. Multiple generations of Central Connecticut's Irish and Irish Americans will gather with their family, friends and neighbors of all races and nationalities. The Central Connecticut Celtic Cultural Committee is both pleased and proud to sponsor this annual event that allows us to return each year to our Capitol City in celebration of our heritage.

In this anniversary year, I extend my thanks to the men and women whose efforts started with the United Irish Societies - who brought this parade from Main Street, to Farmington Avenue , and to those responsible for the establishment of the Central Connecticut Celtic Cultural Committee "5 C's" and our current success in sponsoring one of Hartford's greatest cultural celebrations.

Greater Hartford's St. Patrick's Day Parade is only possible, as the result of the efforts of countless individuals - the Executive Committee of the C.C.C.C., our Town Chairpersons and the many committee members who work year-round to make this parade possible. To all of those individuals I am extremely grateful. I would also like to thank the many local businesses who contribute in so many ways to help make this day a reality and the City of Hartford and all its associated departments for their ongoing assistance and support.

Thanks to the thousands of people who line the streets of Hartford each year to help celebrate with us and to the numerous individuals who helped sustain the parade over the past four decades.

On behalf of the Irish American Home Society and the Central Connecticut Celtic Cultural Committee I want to thank you for proposing this bill. What a great thing this would be if passed as we celebrate our 40th Anniversary of the Parade.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Saunders

Recording Secretary of the Irish American Home Society

General Chair of the Central Connecticut Celtic Cultural Committee